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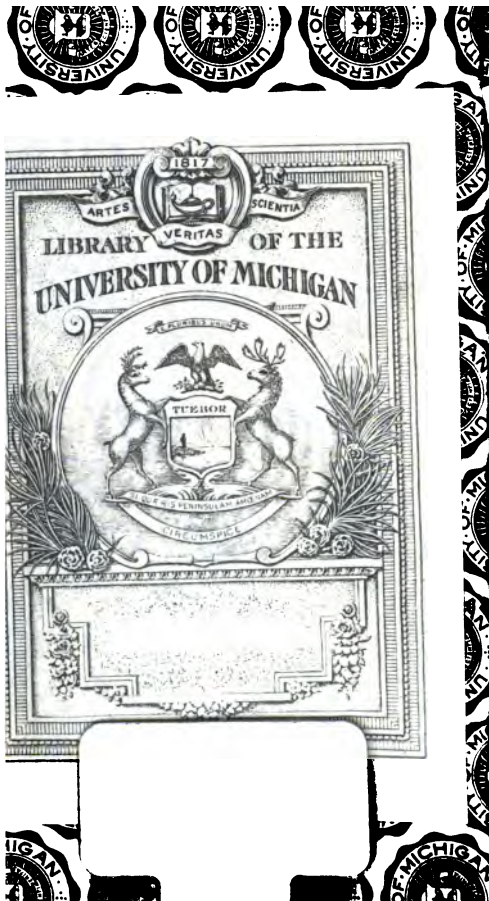
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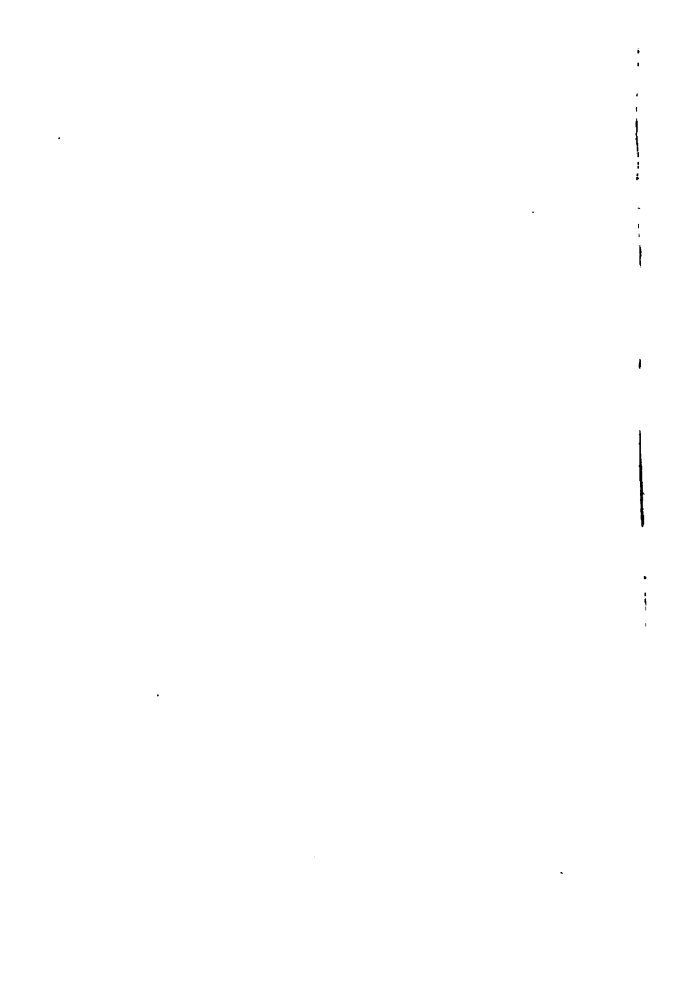
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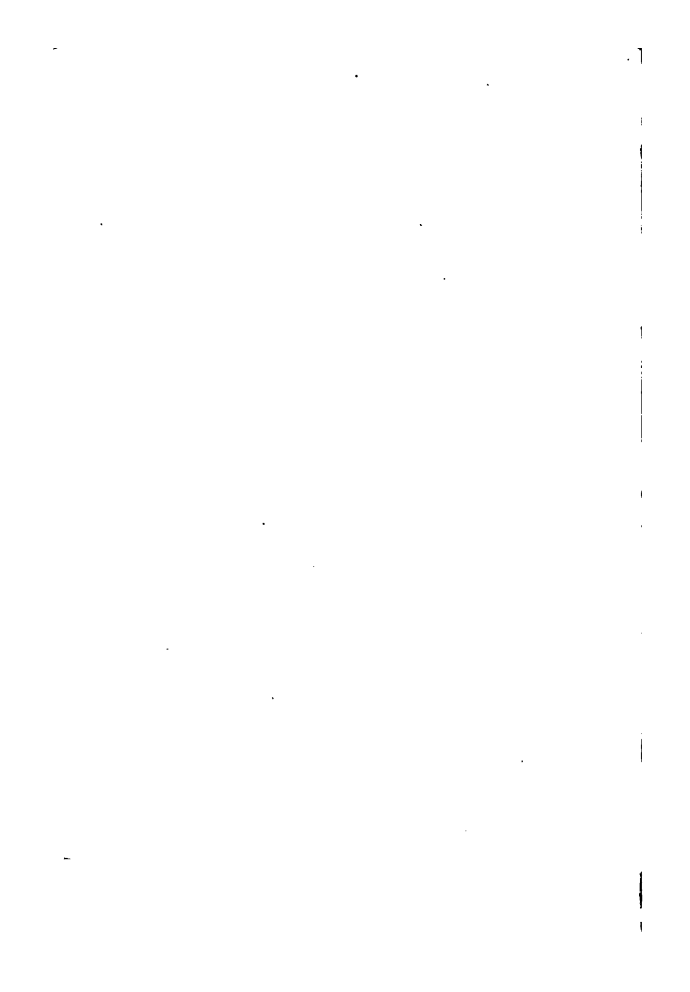




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BUSINESS LIFE
IN 4504
ANCIENT ROME

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BUSINESS LIFE

IN

ANCIENT ROME.

EVERYBODY has heard the story of the tradesman who summoned his son to his bedside to receive his parting advice. "My son," said he, "make money; honestly if you can, but make money anyhow." Like the sea-serpent, this type of the unscrupulous business man turns up periodically in the "facetiae" column of the newspapers. At one time he is said to be an Englishman, at another a German, and again a Yankee. But, for once, the omniscient journalist is at fault; the old sinner was known long before Plymouth Rock was discovered, long before John Bull settled in Britain—nay,

long before the Teuton gave up his shield and spear and turned trader. Nineteen hundred years ago he was known in Rome; the poet Horace saw him, or we misunderstand the following lines :

“ Which is the better teacher, tell me, pray,
 The law of Roscius, or the children’s lay?
 The voice that says, Make money, money,
 man;
 Well, if so be; if not, what way you can;
 Or that which makes you meet with dauntless
 brow
 The frown of fortune—ay, and shows you
 how ?”—HOR., *Ep.* I, i, 65 sq.

It seems strange that this story originated in Rome. To the imagination, the ancient Roman is a hero and a patriot, the lord of the earth; born to rule nations, to spare the vanquished, and to crush the proud. We fancy him at the head of armies, battling with the enemies of his country; or we see him in the senate-chamber, addressing words of burning eloquence to the assembled fathers; anywhere, in fact, except behind the counter. Still the noble

Roman did not disdain to buy and sell, to turn trader, and to hoard up millions. Listen again to Horace :

"Seek money first, good friends, and virtue next :
Each Janus lectures on the well-worn text ;
Lads learn it for their lessons ; gray-haired
men,
Like schoolboys, drawl the sing-song o'er
again."—HOR., *Ep.* I, i, 53-6.

In these lines the poet describes the Rome of his own day ; in his letter to Augustus he has painted it for us as it was in the days of Scipio and the Gracchi :

"At Rome erewhile men rose by daybreak, saw
Their clients at their homes, laid down the law ;
Put money at good interest out to loan,
Secured by names responsible and known ;
Explained to younger folk, or learned from old ;
How wealth might be increased, expense controlled."—HOR., *Ep.* II, i, 103.

When the empire supplanted the commonwealth, no doubt Rome and the Romans were wonderfully transformed, so much so that it is hard to recognize in the mob, shrieking for bread and the games,

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the descendants of Virginius and Icilius.
But Roman thirst for gain was unaltered.
We quote from Juvenal, who wrote early in
the second century :

“It matters not what you may sell,
Of profit fragrant is the smell.
Keep on thy lips, morn, noon, and night,
This teaching of the bard, that might
Do honor to the gods above—
Nay, even, I should say, to Jove.
No one will ask whence comes your gold;
Have it you must, say young and old.
This principle the toothless nurse
Does to the crawling boy rehearse;
This girls upon their parent’s knee
Must learn before their A B C.”

JUV., *Sat.* XIV, 204-9.

In fact, the more deeply we penetrate into
the life of the Romans, the more we shall
be struck by the commercial side of their
character. Patrician and plebeian, soldier
and civilian, captain and senator—nay,
sometimes the emperors themselves—were
filled with the same craving for gain. Nor
is this strange; to stifle it, they must have
been more than men. The world was at

their feet, its luxuries at their command, its wealth at their mercy. What wonder if they stretched forth their hands and plucked the tempting fruit? if they lost the simple manners of their easily contented ancestors, and were filled with the cursed rage for gold? if they exchanged the plough and the sword for the counter and the balance?

But even had it not been born of the lust of wealth, Roman commerce must have been begotten of the needs of the metropolis. Towards the end of the republic, and during the first centuries of imperial rule, the population of Rome, it is estimated, amounted to a million and a half. Within its walls were gathered men of every clime and every nation; and, to provide for all the wants and luxuries of this motley multitude, immense supplies must be brought from every quarter of the globe. Modest, indeed, were the wants of by far the greater number. Of the 1,500,000 inhabitants, fully 900,000 were slaves, whose monthly allow-

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ance was a bushel of corn, a pint of oil, and a little wine. Of the rest the majority were paupers, content, like Neapolitan lazzaroni, to live on the scantiest of fare. A few facts will enable us to form an idea of its meagreness. The historian Polybius, the friend of the younger Scipio, tells us that in his time, the middle of the second century before our era, one day's board and lodging at a northern Italian inn cost about half a cent. At Rome, of course, such rates were out of the question even in Polybius's time, and subsequently prices rose. Still, in Cicero's day a laborer lived on \$44 per year; and under Augustus the yearly maintenance of a slave was computed at \$37.50, or at a little more than 10 cents a day. But, in spite of what we should call starvation board and starvation wages, immense quantities of provisions were consumed by the population of the metropolis. The yearly consumption of corn alone amounted to 15,000,000 bushels. Of oil, the Roman substitute for butter, and of honey, which was

the sugar of the ancient world, the consumption was proportionally great. All Italy was laid under contribution for meat, fruit, and vegetables; Asia and Africa for birds and game; the Atlantic and the rivers of Gaul and Germany for fish; the British waters for oysters; in short, the world was ransacked for dainties of every kind. The fare of the rich was as sumptuous as the food of the poor was mean. That emperors like Nero, Verus, and Heliogabalus should lavish from \$240,000 to \$400,000 on a single banquet was to be expected from their general extravagance. But emperors were not the only ones who were guilty of this imperial folly. We learn from Pliny that Cicero's friend the tragedian *Æsopus* paid more than \$4000 for a single dish of singing-birds; and from Seneca, that *M. Gavius Apicius*, the prince of Roman gourmands, after spending \$4,000,000 on the pleasures of the table, took poison, because, having only \$400,000 left, he saw starvation staring him in the face. When private

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citizens—nay, even an actor—spent thousands of dollars on rare and costly dishes, it is fair to infer that vast sums were invested in their importation and sale. But other luxuries kept pace with those of the table: flowers, perfumes, ointments, dress, swallowed up millions every year. The imports from India, composed in great part of the articles just mentioned, amounted annually to \$2,200,000. Marble and bronze statuary was lavishly distributed through the houses and gardens of the Roman millionaires, and a genuine Scopas or Praxiteles sometimes brought as much as twenty to thirty thousand dollars. For furniture, especially for the famous tables of citrus-wood, prices were given that can be paralleled for extravagance only during the days of the Dutch Tulip mania; \$40,000 to \$50,000 for a single table was no uncommon expense in Cicero's time, when the rage for this kind of furniture had not yet reached its height. Seneca, philosopher and stoic as he was, had five hundred such tables, if we are to

believe the elder Pliny. Where there was so much profusion, and such a passion for foreign luxuries, the import trade must have been very extensive and important.

The Roman export trade was not equally considerable. Still the merchantmen carried oil and wine to most of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. Greece alone, at this time, contended with Italy for the control of the oil and wine markets of Europe and Northern Africa. To her Western possessions, moreover—to Africa, Gaul, Spain, and Britain—Rome sent her literature, and thousands of volumes were annually copied for the schools of these once barbarous countries. In Horace's day, the foreign book-trade was already important; and we note with interest that even second-hand books were often shipped to the provinces. To this Horace alludes in the epilogue to the first book of his *Epistles*, where he affectionately bids his work go forth into the world:

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"Your doom, methinks, is easy to foretell:
While you've your gloss on, Rome will like
you well.
Then, when you're thumb'd and soiled by vulgar hands,
You'll feed the moths or go to distant lands."

But the import and export trade of the Romans dwindles into insignificance by the side of their banking and their foreign speculations. Of course, they had no Erie, Western Union, or Big Bonanza; but they speculated in the revenues of the world. Every year a tithe of the produce in all the provinces was due to the imperial exchequer as taxes, and, in the days of the commonwealth, was farmed out at auction to the Roman capitalists. This system of collecting the revenue not only offered them a ready chance of a lucrative investment, but gave them a firm hold on the trade of the Roman world. Swarms of merchants left Italy to seek their fortunes. In 88 B.C., 80,000 Italian traders were murdered by the order of Mithridates in Asia Minor alone. At Delos, then one of the great commercial

centres of the Mediterranean, 20,000 more fell victims to the wrath of the same Pontic despot. . So numerous were the Roman merchants in Africa that when the treacherous Jugurtha assaulted the town of Cirta, he was kept at bay by the Roman residents. Gaul was overrun with Roman fortune-hunters; and Cicero tells us that not a pennyworth was bought or sold in Gaul that did not appear in the ledgers of the Roman bankers. The result of this unbounded commercial energy was the accumulation of immense fortunes. Crassus, the typical Roman millionaire, had lands worth eight million dollars; how much he had invested in houses, slaves, and loans, we cannot even guess. Sextus Pompey, nine years after his father's death, was offered three millions for the wreck of the triumvir's property. Under the empire, a fortune of twelve millions was by no means unusual. The wealth of Pallas and Narcissus, the favorite freedmen of the Emperor Claudius, was rated at that sum; and Seneca, the phi-

losopher, was quite as rich. Once made, these fortunes were put at interest, and brought to Roman coffers no small part of the wealth still remaining to the subject nations.

We see, then, how vast was the commerce of Rome; what a business centre the mighty city must have been; what a bustling scene of commercial life.

It is well worth our while, therefore, to study how these old merchant sovereigns of the world bought and trafficked; to inquire into the science and methods of their mercantile dealings; and to discover what we owe to them and in what we have outstripped them. Let us begin this investigation by entering the city in imagination, and let us first survey the mercantile features of its streets and their life.

It is towards the end of the first century; Trajan is emperor, the greatest of Cæsar's successors. The city is in the heyday of its splendor; it has risen anew from the ashes to which Nero's conflagration had reduced the greater part thirty-five years before.

We enter by the Porta Capena on the south, and, passing up the continuation of the Ap-pian Way, reach the Via Sacra. Why it is called the Holy Street, its appearance does not disclose, for, though besides the Temple of Peace we notice several other temples, it is mainly sacred to business: shop follows shop, and goldsmiths, jewellers, pearl and gem dealers, metal-founders, engravers, and others who minister to the taste and luxury of the wealthy vie with each other in offering attractions to the saunterer. But with these we are not concerned at present; our eyes are full of the streets and their sights. Notwithstanding all the recent improvements, they seem to us mean and unworthy of the mistress of the world. The Via Sacra is only twenty-two feet wide from house-wall to house-wall; while the Via Nova, or New Street, which led us to the Porta Capena, and is one of Rome's boulevards, measures little more than fifty feet across. The less important streets are much narrower; many, in fact, are mere alleys only six feet wide,

and fairly entitled to be called One-by-one streets. The pavement is formed of large, flat, irregular blocks of stone. The sidewalks, where there are any, rise about a foot above the street-level, and are from three to five feet wide. Thick stepping-stones, whose upper surface is on a level with the sidewalk, are imbedded in the pavement at intervals so as to permit the pedestrian in rainy weather to cross from side to side without wetting his feet. These were the Roman substitutes for the rubber and the arctic. They have one drawback, however: driving is made inconvenient everywhere; in the narrow streets it is all but impossible. Most of the streets are as irregular as they are narrow. Like Knickerbocker's New Amsterdam, Rome's network of thoroughfares seems to have been laid out by the cows. The hills and valleys, to a great extent, determine the course of the roads, the most important of which lead to the great markets; above all, to the Roman Forum.

But while noticing these peculiarities of the streets, we have been struck by a singular feature in their life. We are in the heart of a great metropolis, and yet we miss completely the turmoil of vehicles that enlivens the modern city. No railroad-train thundering at lightning speed over our heads; no street-cars rumbling; no omnibus jolting over the pavement; not even the cab and carriage associated in our minds with all that is ancient and venerable; nothing but a few lumbering drays, that wearily drag stone and timber to some new buildings, evidently intended for public offices. Unless, when consul, priest, or vestal is conveyed in state chariot during some public pageant, these drays are the only vehicles to be seen in the streets for ten hours after sunrise. Only after the shades of evening have begun to fall do the melodious jarring and rumbling of market-wagons, and the loud, hoarse voices of their drivers, resound in the metropolis, and invite its denizens to gentle slumber!

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And yet, by day, Rome's streets are by no means devoid of life. Up and down the narrow thoroughfares there surges a brisk and varied life :

"There goes a builder's gang all haste and steam;

Yon crane lifts granite, or perhaps a beam;
Wagons and funerals jostle; a mad dog
Ran by just now; that splash was from a hog."

HOR., *Ep.* II, 2, 72.

"The press before him stops the client's pace :
The crowd that follows crush his panting
sides

And trip his heels; he walks not, but he rides:
One elbows him, one jostles in the shoal;
A rafter breaks his head or chairman's pole;
Stockinged with loads of fat town-dirt he goes;
And some rogue soldier with his hobnailed
shoes

Comes down with all his weight upon his toes."

JUV., *Sat.* III, 243 sq.

Horse-power and steam-power are replaced by man - power. Slaves in part lug the builder's materials, slaves carry the merchant's goods, and slaves swiftly bear along the wealthy lord in his sumptuous litter. The narrow sidewalks are, to a great extent,

occupied by these human beasts of burden, causing much crowding and many a collision. From the midst of the struggling throng, especially as we approach the markets, are heard at intervals the hoarse cries of the huckster, for Rome has a plenteous supply of itinerant merchants. Here a wandering cook peddles his smoking sausages, a favorite dainty among the lower classes; there a second sells soaked beans or pease; while a third is hawking fruit—apples, pears, peaches, or figs. In another place we remark a filthy fellow from beyond the Tiber who barter sulphur matches for rags or broken glass. The peanut-seller, the idol of the American theatre-goer, is as yet unknown; but the Roman mob—who, according to Horace, were as noisy patrons of the drama as their modern successors—were not to be cheated out of their fun by so trifling a circumstance. Sympathetic street dealers sell them beans and nuts with which to express their appreciation of high art.

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Vying with the peripatetic vender as a plague, the mercantile squatter also excites our attention. Fungus-like, he shoots up in the Forum and the Campus Martius; but every kind of soil is favorable to his growth. Street after street was encroached upon by these public pests, until the emperor himself was forced to break up the intolerable evil. No doubt Martial expresses the feeling of the whole city when he thanks Domitian for putting down this nuisance, which he describes as follows:

"No more with many a chained jar the pillar's
hung;

No more with piled-up filth the prætor soils
his feet;

His blunted knife no barber whets among
The crowd; no blackened inns now fill the
street.

Barber and butcher, innkeeper and cook,
Beyond their premises now stray no more.
Hail Rome once more! On Rome again we
look;

'Twas one vast wilderness of shops before."

MART., VI, 61.

Hitherto the streets and their shifting throngs have so filled our eyes that we have passed the houses without noticing them. Still they offer many quite novel features. There they rise, generally from three to four stories high, presenting a flat, almost unbroken, front. In the upper stories a few windows, mere pigeon-holes, stare at us, suggesting pictures of gloom and foul air within. But appearances are deceptive. Most of the houses, like our "French flats," are built around an open court, from which they get their light and ventilation. Except in the aristocratic quarters, there are extensions one story high along the front of the houses; while porticoes cover the sidewalks, affording shade and shelter to travellers. The fronts of the extensions are almost entirely open, and display the interior to the surprised gaze of the passer-by; for these unpretending booths are often filled with wonders of taste and splendor; they are the stores of Rome's merchant princes.

Here at Rome the dealer not only displays his merchandise to the best advantage, but spares no effort to deck out by other means his shop in the most attractive manner. Restaurant-keepers especially hang their shops with festoons of greens and flowers, on which the eye, wearied with the endless glare of brick and stone, rests with a grateful sense of relief. On many pillars in the stores there are tablets of stone or wood, with figures in relief. Here, for example, we see the image of a goat; what does it mean? It is a milkman's sign. Five hams all in a row inform us that we are now opposite a provision store; a few steps more bring us abreast of quite an elaborate work of art. Here we see pictured the interior of a shop; gentlemen and ladies are examining various articles of clothing, while the owner and his clerks are attentive to their wishes. Over the store appears the name of P. Fannius Apollophanes, the clothier. A mill driven by a mule advertises a baker's shop; for at

Rome every baker grinds his own flour: he is no less a miller than a baker. Another large relief: a girl is haggling with a woman, perhaps she is the shopman's wife; he is a butcher and dealer in game, for behind the women on the wall hang a hare, two boars, and several large fowl. But what is the meaning of this emblem? An immense elephant; around it is twined a snake, while near-by stands a dwarf, the guardian of the monster. Luckily there is an inscription added. Let us read it: "Inn. Here is to let a dining-room with three couches and every convenience"—an inscription that would be much in demand in New York at present. But make haste slowly: the three couches are not the three beds which are the legal essentials of a New York inn; they are dining-room furniture—three lounges. The Roman did not sit at table; he stretched himself on a lounge, resting on his left elbow, and thus regaled himself at ease. So we are at the Elephant Inn. As we continue our

stroll, we meet a whole menagerie of inns—Dragon inns, Cock inns, Big and Small Eagle inns, Crane inns, and a host of others which we shall not patronize. Rome, evidently, is a hospitable city; the stranger is sure of a pleasant reception, provided he have a well-filled purse. Wine-shops, too, there are in profusion, wherein the thirsty soul may cheer himself; but Bacchus has the field all to himself: neither Gambrinus nor the god of gin and Bourbon, if there be any deity in charge of those bad spirits, is worshipped at Rome. Another sign we look for in vain is the big Indian—the Indian who kindly offers us a bundle of cigars, and never indulges in those wayward freaks which make the braves of the Black Hills such unpleasant neighbors. As we continue our ramble, we notice that not every sign is in Latin. True, the days of Worth and the Parisian dressmaker are still in the womb of futurity; nor did the Rhine at that time send forth colonies of tonsorial artists. But what Paris is to New York, that

Greece was to Rome. No wonder, therefore, that now and then a specially ambitious bazaar plumes itself on its Greek owner by displaying a Greek inscription. Here is one in verse :

“Victorious Hercules dwells here, of Jove’s own
race;

Let naught that’s evil enter e’er this place.”

It is the very distich which, seen by Diogenes over the shop of some not wholly reputable Athenian, led him to inquire how the owner got in.

If we approach more closely to the shops, we notice that the threshold is often inlaid with inscriptions in mosaic. Most frequently we see the sentence “*Salve lucrum*,” “Hail profit.” In book-stalls the columns are hung with tablets announcing the works for sale and their prices—a custom probably not peculiar to dealers in literature. Travellers bear witness to the irrepressible bent of the Italian to immortalize himself by scrawling his whims on any surface available; it is a trait he has in-

herited from his Roman forefathers. To this are due notices like the following :

“No place for idlers here; lounge, away!”

Lastly, beside the emperor's statue, which is seen in every shop, we notice the frequent recurrence of the image of a serpent. This is in the nature of a talisman; it is the genius of the place, and is believed to keep all evil influences away from the shop.

Our ramble has made us acquainted with the general outside aspects of trade in Rome. We now pass from the general to the special, and from outward appearance to business ways and methods. It has already been said that Roman trade was an import rather than an export trade. While Italy furnished much of the wine and oil used by its dependent peoples, it drew not only on its provinces, but on the most distant countries of the East and West, for the supplies needed by its enormous population. China sent hither silk; India, gold, gems, ivory, rugs, dyes, and spices; Persia, peacocks, drugs, arsenic, and minium; Meso-

potamia, asphalt and asses; Egypt, marble, salt, linen, lentils, pears, and great quantities of corn; Asia Minor, marbles, metals, wines, and the various kinds of merchandise which the Levant even now scatters broadcast over two hemispheres. The West, again, found at Rome a ready market for its products, from the amber of the Baltic to Spanish merino, mackerel, and hams. But to enumerate all Rome's imports would take us beyond our limits; suffice it to say that no product of the Old World, howsoever rare and valuable, was wanting in the Roman shops. Usually these articles were carried by ship to Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, or rather, in imperial times, to the Portus Augusti, two miles north of Ostia. Many of the costly Indian goods, however, were landed at Puteoli, near Naples, and thence distributed through Italy. From Ostia merchandise was conveyed to the city either in canal-boats drawn by oxen, or on raft-like vessels called *caudicariae*. Building materials, stone, and,

above all, marbles—of which large quantities, white and colored, were imported from Europe, Asia, and Africa—were landed at a special dock, the Marmorata. This lay a little south of the Aventine, and was brought to light again not many years ago. Even the remnants of the marble buried there show how choice the old Romans were in their selection of this material, and what immense sums were invested in this branch of trade. A little north of the marble docks lay the great Roman wharf called the Emporium. Perhaps no sight in Rome would so interest the business man as the bustling life of which this was the scene. Here were boatmen shouting, stevedores loading and unloading, drays carting away the newly arrived merchandise, commission-dealers buying and selling, lounging lazzaroni ready to carry off ill-guarded property, and, ubiquitous as at the present day, the customs officer. In the days of Athens and Rome, the free-trader and protectionist did not as yet do battle for the

right; but as the state coffers wanted revenue, the merchant paid from two and a half to twenty-five per cent. duty, without inquiring whether it was promoting or injuring his business. In fact, his goods were taxed not only when entering harbor, but often on land also; and Indian goods paid duty not once, but even twice and three times, on their way through Egypt to Rome. Close by the Emporium, as might be expected, there had risen up immense *horrea*, or storehouses. In the largest of these corn was stored; but there were also magazines for spices, candles, paper, and other commodities. Nor were they confined to the neighborhood of the Emporium; each of Rome's Fourteen Regions, or wards, is credited with more than a dozen. Many of them were government property, leased out to importers and wholesale dealers; but many, too, had been erected by rich knights and senators. Among the latter were the *horrea Galbiana*. Of this, if we may follow Jordan, a description has been

left us by a Spanish rabbi, Benjamin de Tudela, who visited Rome in the twelfth century. It had three hundred and sixty windows, and a circumference of three miles; and was, therefore, more than twice as large as the Grand Central Depot. Of course, each of the three hundred and thirty-five horrea was not of these gigantic proportions. Still, probably, all were very large, and, if set alongside our modern commercial palaces, would have no reason to blush on account of their size. They prove to us that the Roman *negotiatores* (wholesalers and importers) were men of enterprise and broad views. When we bear in mind how scant were the means of transportation, we have reason to wonder at the existence of mercantile establishments of such size and importance. Besides the owners and occupants of the *horrea*, we read of wholesale drovers, pork-dealers, lumber-dealers, wine and oil merchants.

Of manufactories on a large scale there were few in Rome, though some of the most

prominent nobles owned factories in Italy and the provinces. Even the emperors did not disdain to be interested in ventures of this kind. M. Aurelius inherited from his mother immense brick-factories; and even now bricks are found bearing the name of Cn. Domitius Tullus, the emperor's great-grandfather by adoption. Another emperor, Pertinax, for three years conducted a felt factory in Liguria. As senators were forbidden to engage in trade, the future emperor had recourse to the usual expedient to baffle the law: he set up in business trusty freedmen and slaves who disposed of his manufactures; other senators owned potteries or worked mines and quarries.

But though great quantities of merchandise were supplied by these factories, and the finer fabrics were imported ready-made from the East, most manufactured articles were produced on a small scale in the city itself. It was truly a beehive of artisans and mechanics. Bakers, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, smiths, dyers, tanners, full-

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ers, potters, masons, carvers, and a host of others here busily plied their trades, and earned a modest livelihood. How wonderful was the skill of many of these mechanics we know from the specimens of their art which have been preserved for us at Pompeii and Herculaneum; but the development of their crafts is also strikingly shown by the minute subdivision of labor which we meet with in imperial Rome. Take the tailors, for instance. Besides the tailoresses (*sarcinatrices*), we find general tailors (*sartores*), shirt-makers (*indusiarii*), breastband-makers (*strophiiarii*), menders, and slave-tailors (*centonarii*). Of shoemakers, there were five or six varieties. Even the sculptor restricted himself to one branch of his art. There were artists who produced only Genii or Victories—nay, some whose sole occupation was to insert eyes into statues made by others. Two statues have been found in which the bodies were exact duplicates, though one was surmounted by the head of Augustus, the other by

that of Agrippa. Some sculptors, therefore, kept on hand a supply of ready-made bodies, for which heads were made to order. Of course, the price of work so produced was very low, and a respectable life-size statue of marble or bronze could be got for one hundred and thirty to one hundred and seventy dollars, at a time when from ten to thirty thousand dollars were paid for a Phidias or a Scopas.

No doubt, many of the mechanics and tradesmen of Rome were slaves; but that a large number were free citizens must be inferred from the number and importance of their *collegia*, or guilds. Their establishment reaches back into hoary antiquity, for they are said to have been founded by Numa Pompilius. They were associations with corporate rights, whose aim was not only to further the business interests of their members, but also to provide them with congenial amusements. Not only each trade had its guild, but sometimes each branch of a trade. For instance, there were

not only goldsmith and silversmith guilds, but also a guild of ringmakers. Of their influence on business life, we have no detailed knowledge. We are better informed of their social features. They all worshipped Minerva, the goddess of mechanical arts, whose festival (March 19 to 23) they scrupulously kept; but, besides, each guild had some special patron, whose feast was celebrated by them with much pomp and display. The bakers, for instance, were the special wards of Vesta, the goddess of the hearth-fire; and on her feast (June 9) they marched forth in procession, accompanied by their asses, which were adorned with garlands of flowers and loaves of bread. The musicians had a more exalted patron—Jupiter Capitolinus himself—and right royally did they honor his feast (June 13). Masked, for the most part, in female garb, they marched through the streets full of mirth and wine, playing and singing the jolliest of songs. But one of the merriest days in the yearly life of the Roman me-

chanic was the feast of Anna Perenna on the ides of March. On that occasion the laboring classes had a universal picnic outside of the city; and many a bumper was drunk, for each prognosticated for himself as many additional years of life as he quaffed glasses of wine. Towards evening, when all had insured for themselves a long life, they returned home, not without affording much amusement to the city *gamins*, and much trouble to their wives, whose duty it was to convoy their jolly lords to their homesteads.

The expenses of the artisan were not very large, for living at Rome was cheap. From an edict of the Emperor Diocletian which seems to give the maximum prices of labor and merchandise, Forbiger has conjectured that the shop rent cost from \$60 to \$75 annually, while the average yearly pay of a journeyman mechanic was from \$95 to \$125 and board. The annual cost of food he computes at \$40, and of clothing at \$15, per head. The prices of the mechanic's products were correspond-

ingly low, as appears from the following items: 1 felt hat, \$1; 1 pair man's gaiters, 50 cents; 1 pair woman's gaiters, 30 cents; 1 pair shoes, 36 cents; 1 pair man's sandals, 26 cents; 1 pair slippers, 30 cents; 1 tunic, \$16 to \$36; 1 toga, \$20 to \$48. We must not forget to mention that a shave could be had at the most fashionable shop for four cents.

When their earnings were so exceedingly moderate, mechanics were not likely to become millionaires. But even under the most adverse circumstances, Fortune will smile on her favorites. Of these was Juvenal's barber. Much to the disgust of the poet, whose beard he had rasped in early manhood, he finally rivalled the richest senators in wealth. Pliny tells the story of an ugly hunchbacked slave, Clesippus by name, and a fuller by trade. At an auction sale of his master's effects, he was thrown in with a candlestick that was sold to a widow. He gained the favor of his mistress, became her heir, and bloomed out into a millionaire. Thereafter the candlestick was the principal deity of his chapel.

But, apart from these favorites of fortune, the artisans of Rome had a hard struggle for existence. They not only labored and toiled at their trades, but neglected no opportunity to turn an honest penny by other expedients. Our modern distiller at times keeps cows, and sells swill milk, it is said; at Rome every baker utilized his bran by keeping hogs, and these, roaming through the streets of the metropolis, formed a pleasing feature in the landscape, and diffused an exceedingly fragrant aroma. As we find now and then a barber who trains canaries to distract his victims and to put a few extra dollars into his purse, so the barbers, cobblers, and tailors of Rome educated crows and magpies. Some of these birds have become historical. Under Tiberius, a raven trained by a cobbler flew to the rostra every day and croaked out the names of the emperor and of his nephews, Drusus and Germanicus. A neighboring tradesman killed the bird through spite; he could not have fared worse had he kill-

ed its owner. He was expelled from the ward and then assassinated, while the murdered pet was borne to solemn burial by two blackamoors. A crow was the heroine of a less tragical story. Its master had drilled it to say, "Hail Cæsar, victorious emperor!" in the hope that Augustus would pay a handsome price for so loyal a bird. Often, when the scholar proved stupid, the cobbler growled out, "I have lost my time and my trouble." At last, the bird's education being finished, it was taken to the emperor. It shrieked "Hail Cæsar!" most enthusiastically, but to no purpose; Augustus obstinately refused to buy the bird. At last, as if conscious of the situation, the crow croaked out, in disgust, "I have lost my time and my trouble." It was at once installed in the palace, and the cobbler went home rejoicing.

The Roman tradesman was an object of scorn to the wealthier classes, and the butt of their jokes. He was charged with ignorance, knavery, and filthy habits. The fishmongers were taunted with wiping their noses on

their sleeves, and the tanners reproached for finding no offensive smell in the money which they earned by their unsavory industry. No doubt, there was some truth in these accusations. Still, all the mechanics of the Seven Hills were far from being unlearned; some evidently relished poetry, for, on the walls of their shops, lines from Virgil, Ovid, and other poets are found by the modern explorer.

For the most part, the shops adjoined the dwellings, and men of the same trade often dwelt next to each other in the same street. Hence the frequent occurrence of street names derived from mechanical callings. We find a Potter Street, for example, or, as the Romans called it, "Among the Potters," besides Broker, Drover, Glazier, Shoemaker, Corn-dealer, and Harness-maker streets. It was in the Scythe-makers' Street that Catiline for the last time met his fellow-conspirators. Clearly these artisans must have believed it an advantage to herd together, and had already discovered that competition is the life of trade.

We have sketched in outline a picture of Rome's import trade and manufactures; let us now see how the imported and manufactured articles were distributed to the purchasing community. To begin with the small tradesmen, they sold their own products, as they do among us. For the sale of jewelry, fine furniture, and imported fabrics of all sorts, there were numerous shops in the Via Sacra, the Roman Broadway, and especially in the Septa Julia, which may be compared to Union Square. The Septa Julia, in the Campus Martius, was originally an enclosure where, in the days when they still had a voice in the government of the commonwealth, the Romans assembled to vote. But the franchise, first shorn of its importance, was soon after abolished, and commerce invaded the sanctuary of Roman freedom. At the beginning of the second century, no place offered more attractions to the most fastidious purchaser. Here were sold fair slaves, citrus-wood tables, banqueting-couches inlaid with tor-

toise-shell, ivory goods, crystal and murrhine vessels, precious old bronze statues, artistic silver goblets, pearl earrings and emerald necklaces. We have already mentioned the fabulous sums lavished on citrus-wood tables. Equally marvellous were the prices paid for vases of murrha. This substance, which has been identified by modern scientists with glass, Chinese porcelain, agate, and fluor-spar, was first made known to Roman lovers of bric-à-brac by Pompey's army on its return from the war against Mithridates. Once known, it excited a real mania, that lasted for fully a hundred years. Even under Nero, when the frantic demand had brought a larger supply, the ex-consul T. Petronius not only paid \$300,000 for a wine-ladle made of this substance, but on his death-bed deliberately dashed it to pieces, to prevent its falling into the hands of the grasping tyrant.

Compared with the fortunes thrown away on murrha and citrus, paltry, indeed, was the value set on even the fairest and most

accomplished slaves. With a sneer at the gluttony of Crispinus, an upstart senator of Domitian's reign, Juvenal tells us that he paid more for a single fish than the fisherman would have brought; the price of the fish was about \$240. Horace's slave Davus had cost him \$85 dollars; while he values another, evidently a superior article, at \$320. But at the Septa Julia only choice specimens were offered for sale—girls remarkable for beauty and men whose attainments made them fit to be the companions and teachers of Rome's nobles and emperors. Fifteen hundred dollars was no extravagant price for a beautiful lady's-maid; and male slaves familiar with all the learning of the Greeks fetched at times as much as \$30,000. Sad, indeed, was the lot of these unfortunates; so fair, so accomplished, and to be the bondsmen of men and women who had no check upon their passion or their temper; so gently nurtured, and to be subject to their master's brutality, with no law to protect their

limbs, their lives, and their honor. There they stood in the Septa Julia, men of the same race, with the same blood coursing through their veins, perhaps with superior advantages of education—there they stood, exposed to the coarse, foul ribaldry of real and pretended buyers, conscious that only their master's whim or disposition stood between them and mutilation or death. Let us dwell no longer on the heart-sickening scene. Christianity has practically asserted the brotherhood of man, and bondage is banished to the benighted wilds of Africa.

Let us here leave the splendors and the miseries of the Septa Julia and pass on to the markets. The New-Yorker of the present generation, unless he be a grocer, a butcher, or a boarding-house keeper, hardly knows that there are markets in the city. Meat, corn, and vegetables are brought almost to our doors. Not so in ancient Rome. There, as in many cities of Europe and America at the present day, the principal means for the distribution of meat

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and vegetables were the markets. In early times, when Rome was only the first of a hundred Italian equals, the great Roman Forum, or market, with its branches the Bull's Head, hog - market, and vegetable-market, had sufficed to supply the wants of its citizens. Thither flocked every week, or rather every eight days (for the Roman week had eight days), the farmers of the neighborhood, to settle their law-suits and to sell their produce. Thither they drove their sheep, their oxen, and their swine, and thither they carried their cheese and their cabbage. Thither, too, thronged the Roman burghers to cater provisions for the week. To the Forum led all Rome's great streets, says Jordan; in short, the Forum Romanum was the very heart of the city: it received and distributed the necessities of life. But in Trajan's day much was changed. The butchers' stalls which had once lined the Forum were there no more; the memorable spot where the stern Virginius had sacrificed his lovely daugh-

ter, to save her from the dark designs of the decemvir Claudius, was in the possession of bankers and brokers. Where formerly a plain, not to say shabby, portico had sheltered buyers and sellers, litigants and judges, against the rays of the sun or the violence of the rain-storm, there rose up proud basilicas and ambitious buildings. Though the great Forum was now Rome's Wall Street, though the vegetable-market had disappeared, the Bull's Head and the hog-market were as lively as ever before. Fish-markets, a sheep-market, a pastry-market, and a wine-market offered unrivalled delicacies to the fastidious gourmand; while more popular than all, *macella*, or general markets, erected north of the Forum, on the Esquiline, the Cœlius, and probably elsewhere, supplied their districts not only with all the necessaries of life, but also with every conceivable dainty. The *nundinæ*, or weekly market-days, were replaced by daily markets; and the word *nundina*, or ninth day, now meant market-

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day in general; it was no longer needed for its older use, for the Egyptian week of seven days had been substituted for the old Roman week. Besides the regular markets, there were annually four great fairs. When the games of Apollo in July (15th-19th), the Roman games in September (20th-23d), the Plebeian games in November (18th-21st), and the Saturnalia in December brought crowds of rustic spectators to see the glories of the town, its merchants decked out their bazaars in their gayest attire; and many a Roman trader joyfully counted the dollars he had cajoled out of the pockets of the close-fisted peasantry. On those days, above all, Rome's markets were resplendent with a thousand attractions, and thronged with crowds of purchasers. But even on ordinary market-days they were the busy scenes of varied life. A stroll among the stands would make us acquainted with many of the domestic habits of the Romans.

"Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great?"

asks Cassius, in Shakespeare. Should we ask the same question concerning the Roman people, the markets would tell us that the conquerors of the world had grown great on pork. Not that their carnivorous instincts in this direction were very strong; for the Romans of old, like their modern successors, were sparing consumers of meat in general. The ambassadors of the Samnites found old M. Curius Dentatus feasting on turnips from a wooden platter; and even in the luxurious days of the empire, *puls*, or gruel, was the commonest food of the masses. But pork was the favorite meat of the Romans, whether in the shape of the Tuscan boar, which formed the chief dish of the ambitious host, or of the sausage and bacon, which were patronized by high and low alike. Beef, strange to say, the Romans never appreciated; and, compared to the crowds of the hog-markets, the patrons of the Forum Boarium were few in number. It was chiefly bought for sacrificial purposes, for no offering was considered more acceptable to the gods than

the cow or the bull. Perhaps the indifference of the Romans to beef was a remnant of ancient superstition. Certain it is that in the early days of Rome it was a capital crime to kill an ox, for the ox was regarded as the companion and benefactor of man: to slay him was the basest ingratitude. Lamb, mutton, and veal were apparently regarded with no great favor, for they form no part of the bill of fare at the banquets described by Horace. The trade in game, on the contrary, was considerable, and many a hare and rabbit fell a victim to the discriminating appetite of the Roman epicure. Nor did he disdain game birds and fowl, from the humble chicken to the snipe, the partridge, and even the rare and costly peacock. Capons, too, were fattened for the Roman markets, and many a goose, after glutting itself for a few months with figs and dates, resigned its liver to the gourmand of the Italian metropolis. But perhaps no class of market-dealers carried on a more prosperous

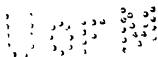
trade than the fishmongers, whether we consider the amount of their sales or the high prices they exacted. We have already seen that a senator in Domitian's time bought a mullet for \$240; and Tiberius, who, in his way, was a reformer, complained that three mullets had been sold for \$1200. The chief offenders in this emperor's time were the celebrated Apicius and P. Octavius. On one occasion a large mullet had been presented to Tiberius, who sent it to the market to be sold, with the remark, "It will surely be bought by Apicius or Octavius." The emperor's prophecy turned out true. The two gourmands met in the market, and bid one against the other until Octavius carried off the prize for \$200. The turbot, also, and the Spanish mackerel were sold at high figures in the *macella*, and it would be tedious to enumerate all the denizens of seas and rivers which enriched the fishmonger and tickled the palate of the epicure. Oysters, too, sea-urchins, and other shell-fish were prized by enthu-

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siastic connoisseurs, who claimed to recognize by the taste whether the succulent mollusk had been bred at Circeii, in Lake Lucrinus, or in the British waters. But though the fish-market was undoubtedly well patronized by the upper ten, the masses found their needs best supplied in the vegetable and fruit markets. To enter into details here would carry us beyond our limit, and it will suffice to give a table of prices for the most common articles of food :

Beef and mutton, per lb.....	\$0.04	10 to 20 pears....	\$0.02
Lamb and fresh pork, per lb...	.06	4 lbs. large grapes	.03
Ham, " ...	.10	Green beans, per pt.....	.02
Bacon, " ...	.08	Green pease(hull- ed), per pt....	.02
River fish, per lb.	.02	Duck, per pair...	.20
Sea fish, " ...	.06	Chicken, per pair	.30
Salt fish, " ...	.03	1 fattened goose.	1.00
1 pair of quail...	.30	5 to 10 heads of lettuce.....	.02
Eggs, per doz....	.06	30 radishes	.02
Milk, per pt.....	.04	20 turnips.....	.02
Wheat, per peck.	.16	10 cucumbers....	.02
Salt, " ...	.25	25 green onions..	.02
Spelt, " ...	.08	Oil, per pt.....	.06-.20
25 st. asparagus..	.03	Honey, per pt..	.04-.20
10 to 40 apples...	.02		

To the reader of Roman history no place in the Eternal City is more familiar than the Roman Forum. In the glorious days of the republic, it had been the scene of many a memorable meeting, and had witnessed the rise and the fall of many a doughty political leader. But now Roman liberty was dead; the banker had taken the place of the consul, the auctioneer of the orator. A busy scene it was everywhere; but especially, near the three arched entrances called the *Jani*, there resounded the clinking of coins, the voluble drone of the auctioneer, and the excited shouts of the bidders. On the tables of the money-changers (*nummularii*, *mensarii*) were heaped up tall piles of new Roman coins to be exchanged for the moneys of the Eastern and the Western World. Around them thronged men from every part of the globe, arrayed in a hundred picturesque fashions, and chattering as many different tongues. Here was a Pergamenian, decked in bright flowing robes, selling his *cistophori* at a dis-



count of forty per cent. ; there a Greek in his national *chlamys*, or shawl, discounting his Attic drachms ; while, strongly contrasting with both, stood a Gaul clad in *bracæ*, the barbarous ancestor of the universal trousers : he is having some gold tested by the broker, the official assayer of the Roman empire, and its agent for the circulation of its coins. But, state official or not, the exchange-broker was hated and treated with contempt. Not so the banker, or *argentarius*, who was regarded with great respect. He invested moneys, made and collected loans, conducted auction sales, received money on deposit, and took charge of large payments. If a merchant wished to pay a large sum, he gave his creditor an order on his banker, who transferred the cash. They had also correspondents in foreign parts, and were thus enabled to transmit money safely and expeditiously. But here the Roman banker stopped short ; according to the latest researches, the money-order, in his hands, never developed into

the bill of exchange transferable by endorsement.

Two methods of investing their moneys were open to the capitalists of Rome: they could farm the public revenues, or loan out their capital at interest. After Augustus's time, it is true, the State itself collected its yearly tithes; still even then the revenue accruing from the taxes on special articles, as well as the mines, the salt-works, and the State domains, were farmed out to the publicans, and great fortunes were invested in them. Immense as was the wealth of men like Vibius Crispus and Narcissus, it was insufficient for such investments. Hence there sprang up joint-stock companies, for the purpose of purchasing and collecting the public revenues. At their head was a *manceps*, who made the bids at auction, signed the contract with the censor, furnished security, and was alone responsible. The company's office at Rome was intrusted to a manager (*magister*), while its business in the provinces was conducted by

an assistant (*pro magistro*), who had charge of the tax-gatherers. Like their employers, they were called publicans, and how unsavory was their repute among the subject nations we know from the New Testament, where the publican is set down as the type of a sinner. The publican, like the modern contractor, was careful to give himself a broad margin for profits; and again, like his modern imitator, had recourse to all kinds of tricks to annul or modify his contract if he had been mistaken in his calculations. Under the republic, the capitalists bought up governors and underlings, consuls and senators, judges and juries; such was their influence that even honest men like Cicero did not dare to oppose them. In 61 B.C., they demanded the cancelling of their contracts. "The measure," writes Cicero (*Att. i*, 17), "is odious; the demand and their avowal of rashness disgraceful." Still he supported it; and in 59 B.C., Cæsar remitted thirty-three per cent. of the contract price. With such political

weight and such methods, no doubt the publicans reaped a rich harvest; and even under the empire, when the field of speculations was greatly narrowed, many a fat dividend must have been paid out in the Roman Forum to the publican stock companies.

Side by side with the publican at Rome stood the usurer. To recount his misdeeds would be to write the history of many of the plebeian uprisings in early Roman history. The famous secession of the *plebs* to the Sacred Mount was, in part, the consequence of the intolerable burden which the patrician usurer laid upon the unfortunate commoner. At that time there were no usury laws, and the unhappy debtor who was unable to meet his obligation was liable to be sold and enslaved. The Decemvirs made eight and one third per cent. the legal interest rate. In 342 B.C., when this law was ignored or evaded, and usury again became intolerable, the Genucian law forbade all interest. The remedy proved

only temporary; when the Roman conquests in the East opened up new fields of speculation to the capitalist, and invited large investments that produced a hundred-fold, the sumptuary laws became a dead letter. After Sulla, one per cent. monthly was the customary rate, though few bankers scrupled to take more. In spite of usury laws, they often charged twenty-four, forty-eight, nay, sixty per cent. Among the most famous usurers of the latter days of the Roman republic were C. Verres—whom the eloquence of Cicero has branded with everlasting infamy—and the slayer of Cæsar, M. Junius Brutus. Verres was the Roman governor, or rather the scourge, of the rich island of Sicily. With the official robbery and the heartless extortion he practised upon his victims we are not now concerned; but, besides fleecing the unhappy Sicilians, he swindled his own government by loaning out the revenues of the Roman people at twenty-four per cent. interest for his own profit. Verres, however, was a

scoundrel, and his usury was in entire harmony with his other villanies; we are indignant, but not surprised, at it. Far different is our feeling with regard to Brutus. Whatever be our judgment concerning the deed with which his name will be forever associated, his contemporaries, the writers of the empire, and modern literature agree in representing him as a disinterested patriot and a man of honor. It shocks us, therefore, to find him practising the grossest and most unblushing usury. Here is the tale told by his friend Cicero: Brutus had lent a large sum to the people of Salamis, in Cyprus. When Cicero went as governor to Cilicia, of which province Cyprus was an appanage, he issued a proclamation, as required by law, fixing twelve per cent. as the maximum legal interest rate. In the face of this, Brutus's agent, M. Scaptius, demanded six years' interest at sixty per cent.; and when the Salaminitans, to escape absolute beggary, refused his demands, Brutus urged Cicero to appoint

Scaptius to the command of a detachment of soldiers, in order to enforce his claims. Cicero, to his honor be it said, resisted the pressure of his friend Atticus, and risked a rupture with Brutus rather than be a party to this outrage. Seneca, whose principles were so pure that they have been ascribed to Christian influence, loaned large sums to the Britons at usurious interest. Suddenly he called in his principal, and by the distress thus caused contributed to bring about the rebellion of Boudicea, which almost annihilated the Roman power in Britain. In the metropolis the capitalists were no less exacting. With heavy heart and gloomy forebodings, the impecunious debtor beheld the approach of the fatal Kalends, the black day, when the interest must be paid. Meantime he had recourse to every stratagem to melt the hard heart of his Shylock. Horace draws a humorous picture of a wretch in this situation who, like a prisoner, listens with strained neck to the long, dreary literary productions of

his creditor. On the other hand, at Rome, as among us, there were not wanting men who had an almost divine gift of extracting loans out of the sternest usurer. Julius Cæsar belonged to this class of privileged borrowers. Before his first election to the consulship he owed many millions of sesterces; in fact, his debts proved stepping-stones to his political advancement, for the only hope his creditors had of being repaid was based on his success.

When we read of the atrocious misdeeds of these usurers, we can hardly realize the fact that the Roman bankers were under state control. The law obliged them not only to keep books, which were legal evidence in court, but, on demand, to submit them to the inspection of the city prætor; and we have the best of evidence that the Roman bankers carefully kept their accounts. Nor were they the only ones who kept books; the Romans were a nation of bookkeepers. At school, arithmetic was one of the principal subjects of instruction.

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"Our Roman boys, by puzzling days and nights,
Bring down a shilling to a hundred mites.

'Come, young Albinus, tell us, if you take
A penny from a sixpence, what 'twill make'—
'Fivepence' — 'Good boy! you'll come to
wealth one day.

Now add a penny' — 'Sevenpence,' he will
say."—HOR., *Ars Poet.* 324.

So Horace describes the training of the future bookkeeper. The seed fell on fertile ground. Until the third century after Christ, everybody in Rome kept books, or rather wax tablets; bankers, merchants, artisans, mechanics, even Roscius, the actor—every citizen—kept a cash-book (*codex accepti et expensi*), in which were entered receipts and expenses in chronological order, with names and conditions. To this the banker added a ledger (*liber rationum*), and a memorandum-book (*adversaria*), in which unfinished transactions were noted for transfer to the other books.

With banking are connected, in modern times, many allied branches of business—its offshoots, so to say. Where the banker rears

his mercantile palace, there also reign the stock and insurance broker. That the Romans had joint-stock companies we have already seen. There is no evidence, however, of the issue of transferable stock. As the revenues were farmed out for five years only, the stock companies, no doubt, expired at the end of that period, and capitalists invested in them only such moneys as they could spare in the meanwhile.

Rome, like most ancient cities, was built with little or no regard to security against fire. The lack of proper chimneys, and the frequent use of wood as a building material, were a standing invitation to the fire fiend, and frequently and destructively did he rage among the thousands of buildings scattered over the Seven Hills. Still there was no such thing as insurance against loss by fire. Strange to say, this did not always prevent men from setting their own property on fire designedly. The explanation is simple enough: it was a case of charity duped. When a family had met with loss

by fire, it was customary for its friends and neighbors to offer assistance that took the form of money or household goods. At times the gifts so made exceeded in value the loss sustained, and hence the greedy were led to speculate on the sympathy of their friends.

Though a thrifty people, and one by no means devoid of family affection, the Romans never devised those medleys of philanthropy and business—saving-banks and life-insurance. Their charity took the shape not of prevention, but of cure. In one particular, however, they were most provident of the future. No matter what became of his wife and children, the poorest Roman was determined to secure a decent burial for himself. Hence though we hear nothing of life-insurance, we do hear of burial associations. The constitution of one of these societies has been preserved, and affords an interesting glimpse of this phase of Roman life; we refer to the rules of the “Worshippers of Diana and Antinous of

Lanuvium." By way of preface, the document begins with a warning. "You who wish to become a member of this association, read the constitution, and then have yourself admitted, that you may not complain afterwards and leave a lawsuit to your heirs." The initiation fee was four dollars and five gallons of wine; the monthly dues, five cents. When a member died, ten dollars were paid to his heirs to defray the funeral expenses, and two dollars were distributed among the mourners at the funeral pile. However, these worshippers of Diana were not wholly engrossed with their funerals; they had an eye also to life and its good things. The rules next provide that complaints must be made at business meetings, "that we may carouse on holidays with uninterrupted glee." Of the banquets referred to, there were six annually. The chief expenses were paid from the treasury; but four members, rotating every year, furnished the cushions for the couches, hot water, and dishes, twenty gallons of wine,

a two-cent loaf and four sardines for every guest. The president, we fear, did not fare as well as the modern insurance-company president. His salary was a double share at distributions; while, to offset this, it was his duty on festive occasions to furnish oil, at his own expense, to all the members.

We have arrived at the grave, or rather at the funeral pile, of the Roman business man; we might now cremate him, put him up in his urn, and place him in his *columbarium*, or pigeon-cot. But the poet tells us "the evil that men do lives after them;" and this reminds us that we must still briefly touch upon his business tricks and expedients. The noble Roman did not at all times disdain to be a rogue, though, like some modern scamps, he was often a sanctimonious one. Here is his portrait, drawn by Horace:

"See your good man, who, oft as he appears
In court, commands all judgments and all ears;
Observe him now, when to the gods he pays
His ox or swine, and listen what he says:

'Great Janus, Phœbus'—this he says aloud,
 The rest is muttered all, and unavowed—
 'Divine Laverna, grant me safe disguise;
 Let me seem just and upright in men's eyes;
 Shed night upon my crimes, a glamour on my
 lies.'"—HOR., *Ep.* I, 16, 56-62.

But let us enter into details. That the Romans were scandalous usurers, we have already seen. Forgers, too, there were among them. Suetonius relates that the Emperor Titus, who was noted for his skill in calligraphy, used to say sportively that were he not an emperor, he might have been a first-class forger. From Cicero we know that there were peculators and falsifiers of accounts. As might be expected where duties were high, smuggling was not uncommon; it was punished by the confiscation of the smuggled goods. In dealing with their customers, too, Rome's tradesmen were not overscrupulous. Adulteration, it is true, was not so common among them as with us: the articles oftenest adulterated nowadays, such as tea and coffee, were unknown to the Romans. Still Roman literature re-

ports one sad case of this species of cheating. In the days of the poet Persius, a disappointed heir resolved to be even with his deceased benefactor; instead, therefore, of cremating him with pure cassia, as was customary, he used a mixture of cassia and cherry-bark. Our dry-goods dealers sometimes victimize their customers by selling them goods that fade as soon as they are exposed to the sunlight. Horace knows of clothiers who palmed off on their patrons stuffs dyed in cheap Aquinian purple for Tyrian goods. The modern housewife must be on her guard against deceitful "bobs;" the Roman matron had imposed upon her the meat of suckling lambs before it was fit for consumption. Our butchers will buy a Texas steer and call it prime Western beef; his Roman prototype sold a leg of a tough old ram and called it tender mutton. The old-time fishmonger, we learn from Plautus, was as exorbitant in his prices, and his goods as aromatically offensive, as our own. Whether there were

at Rome any honest, one-price stores, we know not; we do know that some Roman signs show us the customer haggling with the salesman, as if it were an inducement to the buyer to know that a trader was not obstinate in his prices. It is likely, therefore, that at Rome, as in modern Italy, fixed prices were the exception; and that it was the rule to ask what a customer might be expected to pay. Another practice, even far more worthy of censure, was the use of false weights and measures. In the Forum at Pompeii, near the entrance to the so-called Temple of Venus, there stands a niche in which are placed the normal measures, which the merchant was obliged by law to follow as a standard. No doubt there were similar standards in the Roman markets, and one of the most important duties of the ædiles was the inspection of weights and measures. False measures were destroyed on the spot, as we learn from Juvenal, who tells us that the chief function of the mayor in country towns was—

"Bigly to look and barbarously to speak,
To pound false weights and scanty measures
break."—JUV., *Sat.* X.

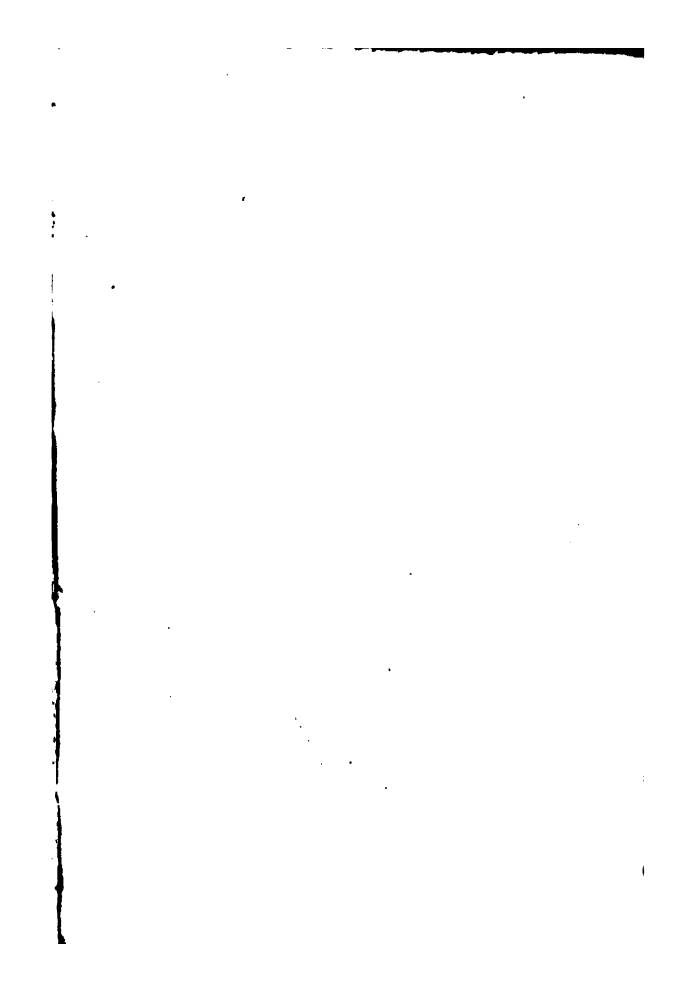
But mercantile jugglery at Rome did not always involve a breach of the laws; the merchants were fully equal to inventing devices that filled their purses, while they steered clear of the law—devices which often earn for the modern business man the epithets of "smart" and "shrewd." They were as keenly alive, for instance, to the advantage of controlling the market as the New York or London merchant. To this the satirist Persius alludes when he makes Greed advise her votary to be the first to take the pepper from the camel, and warns him not even to delay while he slakes the thirst of the parched animal. Again, at the taking of Corinth, in 145 B.C., all its famed factories of bronze and terra-cotta vases were deliberately destroyed. Why? To give the men who had gained possession of the stock the absolute control of the market. We have reason to think

that there were in Rome, as early as the second century before Christ, Jay Goulds, who, in their small way, practised the art of making "corners." The proof of this is found in Plautus's melodrama of the *Captives*. The comic character of this play is the parasite or dinner-hunter Ergasilus. Ergasilus has been in bad luck, for Philocrates, who has been his every-day host, is a prisoner, and he has tried in vain to trap a dinner elsewhere. He has tried his best jokes, but none of the young men whom he had met would take the bait. Sad and despairing, he concludes that they have conspired against him: "they have made a combination," he says, "like the oil-dealers in the Velabrum." Evidently the poet charges those gentlemen with making a corner in oil, and it is much to be regretted that he has given us no details that might enable us to judge how far Wall Street is in advance of the Velabrum.

Here we bid adieu to the Roman man of business. Though separated from our

merchant princes by well-nigh two thousand years, though deprived of many advantages which science has bestowed on the latter, he was not essentially different from him either as a man or as a trader. He was characterized by the same love of gain, the same shrewdness, and the same enterprise, and often achieved as wonderful success. In all these respects the ancient was the peer of the modern merchant. One thing only we may claim for our own times: Christianity has certainly implanted in us a deeper sympathy with the rights and the feelings of our fellow-men, and a greater abhorrence of their violation.

THE END.



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